

Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council
Smyrna Rest Stop
5500 DuPont Highway
Smyrna, DE 19977
June 10, 2019
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Members Present: Darryl Garner, Chair; Suzanne Howell, Vice Chair; Kevin McAllister, Member; Blake Roberts, Member; Sonya Lawrence, Member; Dale Matusевич, DOE/Member

Teleconference: Jaqueline Poquette, Member

Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI): Elisha Jenkins, Director; Sandra Miller, Deputy Director; Jill Morrison, Constituent Relations; Shirley Bryson, District Administrator; Patricia Burrell, SR VR Counselor/Member; Lisa Edmondson, Administrative Specialist

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.

Approval of May 13, 2019 Minutes: Kevin McAllister moved that the Minutes be approved. Suzanne Howell seconded the motion. Motion carried. The Minutes for May 13, 2019 are approved.

Old Business: Kevin McAllister, representing the Council, coordinated with DVI to amend the agenda for the upcoming Retreat. Venue for Retreat will be determined at a later date. Draft agenda was sent to the Council as well as the DVI Director. Retreat will be a full day Friday and a partial day on Saturday. Town Hall Public meeting will be held in the morning on Friday. Agenda items were discussed. Initial feedback from the Director was that the Town Hall Meeting should be in the evening. Kevin McAllister does not wish to move forward with that suggestion due to paratransit times and availability. Director of DVI also recommended that some of the proposed agenda items could be included in the regular VRAC meetings. Mr. McAllister feels that the VRAC limited meeting times do not allow for this type of dialogue. The last observation was that the proposed agenda that was communicated mirrored previous agendas submitted. The new draft agenda took out many of the items that were on the previous agendas. If there are no updates to the agenda within the next 48 hours the agenda should be submitted as it is.

Any type of participant cost requires prior approval from RSA. Last year the agency donated funds for the food for the Retreat as it was denied by RSA. Sonya Lawrence offered to pay for the food for the Retreat if a budget less than \$500.00 can be developed. Darryl Garner offered to help pay for the food. With no costs involved, the agenda does not need to be sent to RSA for approval.

Potential dates for the Retreat are September 13th and 14th. Alternate date is September 20th and 21st.

Update on Sunset Committee proceedings: 31 recommendations were issued. Since then the legislators determined task force would be most efficient in reviewing the recommendations. There are 9 entities and/or individuals on the task force. 3 members from this Council are a part of the task force in some

way. 9 -10 consultants will also be a part of the task force. The task force will begin to meet sometime after July 1, 2019.

Update regarding data that was requested by the Council. Sandra Miller has been working to gather the data for the Council to review and understand.

Recruitment of members for the Council: Sonya Lawrence suggested that the Council create a list of potential organizations who might have people who could serve in the roles that are required to be filled on the Council. Dale will reach out to PIC Executive Director to inform her that we have a PIC position available. Members will send recommendations to Sonya Lawrence to compile the list.

New Business: At the April meeting the Council requested information to understand the representation for the upcoming October events for White Cane Day. The White Cane Day contact person from DVI will be Debbie Talley. Suzanne Howell will be the lead contact and will reach out to Debbie Talley to begin the collaboration on White Cane Day.

The Council wishes to contact the VA regarding services to vets who are blind to determine if there is any opportunity for synergy or possibly some of the vets can join the Council. Darryl Garner will reach out to the VA to get a new contact person.

The Council previously discussed asking Andrea Guest from General VR to request a representative from General VR to attend a VRAC meeting. Darryl Garner will send an email to Andrea Guest.

Reports from the Division for the Visually Impaired:

Director's Report: Monday June 3 the Blind Vendors Committee was selected for one of the Lt. Governor's awards due to the Healthy Vending Initiative that they have been piloting for 2 years.

The month of April was the first time there was a decrease in sales was observed. The Blind Vendors Committee is looking into this.

ILS: On May 24th a workshop "All about Meal Delivery Services" was held. There were 9 participants describing the pros and cons on preparing home meal kit delivery services.

The Division partnered with the Division of Aging's trainer and provided a water cooler discussion, more of a webinar/teleconference on "The Matter of Balance" program which is based off of fall prevention and all of the trials that people go through when they don't have these particular supports in place.

The Division hosted its 2nd Beach House Weekend; one was held in the fall and this one was held in the spring. The older students served as counselors in training for the 15 younger students who participated. Activities included Orientation and Mobility, Independent Living Skills, recreational activities as well as part of the pre-employment transition services working with the vendor to have the students participate in interviewing and interacting with a local business.

A host of outreach activities occurred during the month of May. Senator Lawson presented Senate Concurrent Resolution 40 which recognized May as Healthy Vision Month. The Division hosted the Healthy Vision Family Night at the Delaware Children's Museum on May 15th for the second year with higher attendance than last year. There were eye screenings for students or younger kids. For the adults, the Lions Club did vision screenings as well as audiology screenings from the University of Delaware. There was face painting as well as other activities at this event.

On May 17th the Division participated in Vision to Learns 200,000th pair of glasses provided to a student. A host of elected officials and partners participated in that event.

There will be a lot of work going on around Executive Order number 24 which deals with Delaware being a trauma-informed state.

Vocational Rehabilitation District Administrator's Report:

- Current Caseload: 247
- Employed 90 days: 4
- Employed less than 90 days: 12
- Individuals ready to work: 44
- Median income: \$18.43
- Transition age students 14-21: 77
- Individuals in training: 62

Of the individuals working they are employed by a wide variety of industries.

Humanity's Café: Café is located on the DHSS Campus. Three individuals from VR are working at the café. Currently, they are on the job training soon to be fully employed.

On May 15th VR had an event for business engagement. Derek Alexander led the event. The event was held at the NCC Chamber of Commerce and was well attended. There were vendors present from Microsoft, travel agencies, Main Coast Bank and AT&T.

VR's next event will be held in October. Plans are being developed. The division wants to be creative and develop an event that will result in high attendance at the event. The goal is to highlight our services and get DVI's name out in the business community.

Currently 5 students are graduating from high school with a high school diploma as well as 3 graduating with a high school certificate this year. VR is working with all of them to help them move forward to either work or college. Some of these graduates are participating in our summer activities and some are preparing to get ready for college or go to work.

In July, after the Summer Academy a graduation celebration will be held. Graduates of Summer Academy, high school and college will be honored at the celebration.

Dale Matusevich explained the difference between a high school diploma and a high school certificate.

Sonya Lawrence asked if there is a guide or checklist to outline as to what a student who has a work experience and what their goals should be during that work experience. Dale Matusevich will provide Sonya with a list of soft skills that students need to learn during a work experience.

Action Item: Shirley Bryson will forward survey results to Kevin McAllister.

Kevin McAllister asked about the Division placing students in the Summer Youth Employment program. DVI has 11 slots in Wilmington, 5 spots in New Castle County and 2 spots potentially in Milford.

Announcements:

- The next VRAC meeting will held August 12, 2019. No meeting will be held in July, 2019.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Edmondson

Administrative Specialist I

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